

"The Christian View of Wealth"
1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17
(Preached at Trinity, October 24, 2021)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last time we saw the nature of true contentment.
It is simply being satisfied with Christ.
The world knows nothing of this contentment. That's because they are alienated from their Creator, through whom all things exist. It is because they do not know Christ.
 - A. The lost man is wandering through life seeking meaning, seeking happiness, seeking satisfaction but it is beyond his reach.
 - B. Through Jesus Christ there is reconciliation and forgiveness. Through Jesus Christ there is meaning in life and hope for eternity. The grace of regeneration has transformed our heart, our way of thinking, our order of priorities.
 - a. The lost man sees no value in Christ – the saved man measures all worth through Christ.
Philippians 3:8 NAU - "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,"
 - b. For the Christian, this world takes on a whole new meaning
 - c. The Godly man sees things on earth as they serve a utilitarian purpose.
2. If our contentment is found totally apart from this world, should we shun all of our worldly possessions? Should we divest ourselves of all earthly wealth?
How should the Christian view worldly wealth?
In **verses 9-10** Paul gives one of his strongest statements against the rich man.
 - A. Does this mean that all wealth is evil?
 - B. Does this mean that no Christian should ever be wealthy?
4. No. But Paul tells us there is great danger.
As we consider this subject, there are only two types of people in the world—Christians and pagans. These two groups are opposites.
One loves God supremely and the other loves this present world.
Those who love God are satisfied in Him.
Those who love this present world want more of it. They love material possessions. They love money.

I. In this passage Paul is describing those who love money –

Verse 9 – “those who want to get rich”

Verse 10 – “For the love of money”

A. Wealth has captivated their affections

1. They want to get rich apart from Christ. They fail to see Him as the source of true riches.

Jesus said, **Matthew 6:21 NAU** - "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

2. The example of the Rich Young Ruler – **Mark 10:17-22**

Mark 10:17 NAU - "As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

a. He made all the right advances towards Christ

- (1) He came running
- (2) He came openly - not privately as with Nicodemus
- (3) He knelt before Jesus – a sign of reverence and respect
- (4) He sought eternal life

b. He went away without Christ – His wealth was his treasure

Mark 10:21-22 NAU - "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²² But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property."

3. The lover of money hungers for wealth, he dreams of more wealth
It controls his life – it has ensnared him.
1 Timothy 6:9 NAU - "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction."

4. The lover of money is constantly seeking new ways to make money
gambling, lawsuits, corruption, thievery.
(Businesses spend millions to prevent shoplifting that costs billions)

B. The love of money will lead a man away from God

1 Timothy 6:10 NAU - "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith"

1. Jesus said that it is impossible for a lover of money to enter into heaven

Mark 10:23 NAU - "And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

2. There is no middle ground

Luke 16:13 NAU - "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

3. They may become religious but they have erred from true Christianity

C. Paul says their love of money will cause them much grief -

1 Timothy 6:10 NAU - "and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

1. This is opposite from the world's teaching – the world glories in wealth. They keep lists of the most-wealthy and how they got their money. They drive expensive cars and shoot rockets into space.
2. In reality, the love of money will bring grief and sorrow.
 - a. It drowns men in destruction – They are soon over their head sinking deeper and deeper in the deceitfulness of riches
Verse 9 - "which plunge men into ruin and destruction."
 - b. No one has ever found contentment in wealth
John D. Rockefeller – “I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness. The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money”
Henry Ford – “I was happier doing mechanic's work”¹
 - c. It will end in weeping and gnashing of teeth

II. What is the Biblical teaching concerning wealth?

- A. Wealth is not wrong in and of itself
 1. Money in and of itself is neither good nor bad. We use the term adiaphorous which means, morally neutral.
Money can be used for much good and it can be used for evil.
Paul is warning here against the love of money.
 2. All wealth comes from God
1 Samuel 2:6-7 NAU - "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts."
1 Chronicles 29:12 NAU - "Both riches and honor *come* from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone."
 3. We can find many examples where God has bestowed wealth
 - a. Abraham - Gen. 13:2
Genesis 13:2 NAU - "Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold."
 - b. Isaac - Gen 26:12-13
Genesis 26:12-13 NAU - "Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the LORD blessed him, ¹³ and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy;"
 - c. Joseph - Gen 41:42
Genesis 41:42 NAU - "Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck."
 - d. Solomon - I Kings 3:13; 10:21
1 Kings 3:13 NAU - "I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days."

¹ Quoted from John F. MacArthur Jr., *1 Timothy*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 252.

1 Kings 10:21 NAU - "All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None was of silver; it was not considered valuable in the days of Solomon."

e. Job - Job 1:3

Job 1:3 NAU - "His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east."

4. Wealth should be seen as a gift from God

B. Seeking wealth must never become our chief priority - we find nowhere in Scripture an encouragement to seek wealth

1. The Biblical command is to "Seek first the Kingdom of God"

Matt. 6:33

2. The Biblical command is to fix our hope and confidence on God

1 Timothy 6:17 NAU - "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy."

C. The Bible teaches the danger of setting our hearts on acquiring more wealth.

1 Timothy 6:9 NAU - "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction."

1. Americans should listen carefully to this. By the world's average, most Americans are to be considered rich.

2. Wealth has the potential of turning us from God – **Verse 10**

1 Timothy 6:10 NAU - "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith"

Proverbs 30:8-9 NAU - "Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, ⁹ That I not be full and deny *You* and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God."

a. Wealth can lead to trusting its security. Wealthy people often find little need for God.

b. Wealth may blind us to our spiritual poverty -

Revelation 3:17-18 NAU - "Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich . . ."

3. The love of money isn't the *only* root of evil—our lusts are many. But like the root of a plant, the love of money is often hidden from sight as it gives life and nourishment to our lusts.

D. We must be willing to part with our wealth if God requires it

1. Wealth is temporary – we will all part of our riches eventually

1 Timothy 6:7 NAU - "For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either."

2. We must not hold our wealth too tightly.
Luke 14:33 NAU - "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."
"Hold everything in your hands lightly, otherwise it hurts when God pries your fingers open." - Corrie Ten Boom
3. We must take a cautious approach to our wealth
 - a. It can become an idol to us. God demands that we forsake our idols.
 - b. Our wealth can make us proud
1 Timothy 6:17-18 NAU - "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ *Instruct them to do good*"
 - c. This pride can make us selfish. It can lead to the desire for riches without regard for others. Gambling often demands that someone loses. The desire to win disregards the needs of our neighbor. It can lead to coveting the possessions of another.

Conclusion –

So, what is the Christian principle of wealth?

1. We must maintain the Christian work ethic—the Biblical means of acquiring wealth. The Bible always praises hard work and curses laziness.
1 Thessalonians 4:11 NAU - "make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,"
2 Thessalonians 3:10 NAU - "For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either."
2. As God blesses our labors, we must be wise in the management of our wealth.
 - a. We should strive as much as possible to be debt free and set aside for the future. And prepare for the wise use of our wealth when we leave. It is good to leave an inheritance -- and train well those into whose hands our wealth will fall.
Proverbs 13:22 NAU - "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children"
 - b. We must learn to discipline ourselves to spend less than we make. It's always good to be frugal.
 We should learn to distinguish between wants and needs.
3. We must give abundantly to the kingdom of God
 The first 10% immediately goes to the storehouse.
4. Most important, Jesus Christ must be our true wealth.
 If we have Christ, we have everything. He is the Pearl of Great Price.
Matthew 13:45-46 NAU - "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, ⁴⁶ and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."